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STATINTL

CIA-We've Got To Have It

At a luncheon meeting in Washington Wednesday of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Central Intelligence Agency Director Richard Helms delivered a speech of the first importance to the American people.

The CIA, Mr. Helms observed, is often called an invisible government, spreading slimy tentacles around the country and plotting the eventual enslavement of the American people.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Actually, the CIA is a giant spy agency devoted to gathering information on the activities to all other nations' governments-with special and relentless attention to the enemy regimes in Moscow, Peking and Havana.

It has fascinating pipelines into all of these governments. One of the CIA's star performers, for example, was Col. Oleg Penkovsky, outwardly a high Soviet military intelligence officer who funneled information to our side until the Kremlin found him out and killed him in 1963.

We simply have got to have the CIA, just as the British Empire in its heyday had to have the world-famous British intelligence service. And to keep our so-called Department of Dirty Tricks efficient and effective, we must let it do most of its good works in secret.

As Mr. Helms said in closing, Uncle Sam is a big boy now, and he lives in "a fearsome world," and the CIA is vital to his survival and continued safety. NEW YORK DAILY NEWS.